

## **Ventura Star**

### **Widow can get medical assistance**

By George Compton

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**Q.** My father was medically retired from the military and was rated 100 percent disabled by Veterans Affairs for more than 40 years. My mother is receiving Dependency and Indemnity Compensation and Social Security benefits but her supplement to Medicare is taking most of that money and her prescriptions usually take the rest. Does she qualify for medical and prescription help from the VA?

**A.** Because your father was retired from the military, your mother is eligible for TRICARE instead of a VA program. In her case, TRICARE-FOR-LIFE should be her supplement to Medicare and there is no monthly premium. She should also be getting her prescriptions through TRICARE. You need to go with your mother to the TRICARE office at Naval Base Ventura County and have the whole program explained to her.

**Q.** I am retired military and I was just awarded 20 percent disability for type 2 diabetes based on service in Vietnam. I understand that the compensation I will receive from the VA will be subtracted from my retired pay. I thought Concurrent Receipt would apply so my retired pay would stay the same. Can you explain?

**A.** Concurrent Receipt of retired pay and VA compensation does not apply until the veteran has a rating of at least 50 percent. Even then, Concurrent Receipt is not total except for those rated 100 percent. It will still be some time for total Concurrent Receipt; it is being increased in phases.

Because being in a combat situation caused your disability, you are eligible for Combat Related Special Compensation (CRSC). Under this program, your VA compensation will be subtracted from your retired pay but it will be paid back separately, tax-free.

Unlike Concurrent Receipt, which happens automatically, you must apply for CRSC. We will help you file. Just bring your VA award letter and a copy of your retirement discharge (DD 214). If your discharge does not have any data about Vietnam service, such as awards, then we need other documentation of that service.

- George Compton, a retired Army colonel, is the veterans service officer for the County of Ventura Human Services Agency. Send your questions to Veterans Service Office, 1701 Pacific Ave., Suite 110, Oxnard, CA 93033; phone 385-6366; fax 385-6371; or e-mail [George.Compton@ventura.org](mailto:George.Compton@ventura.org).